

For information
on 6 November 2018

**Legislative Council Panel on
Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene
Subcommittee on Issues Relating to Public Markets**

Development of a New Generation of Public Markets

Purpose

This paper briefs Members on the progress of development of new public markets.

Background

2. In early years, public markets were provided by the two former Municipal Councils primarily to re-site a large number of hawkers trading on-street in a bid to put a stop to environmental nuisance and obstruction to pedestrians and vehicular traffic. With enhanced hawker management, the problems concerning on-street hawkers have largely been contained. Since the late 1990s, the main function that public markets used to serve as a measure to support the hawker policy was no longer valid.

3. Meanwhile Hong Kong has changed with time. For shopping daily fresh provisions, there has been the mushrooming of outlets in modern wet markets, supermarkets and on-street fresh provisions shops, many in chains and clusters. This reflects a changing shopping habit of the public as well as induces more changes.

4. Public markets are now positioned to be one of the major sources of shopping fresh food provisions for the general public, which should be kept reasonably decent, clean, neat and tidy without being unduly upmarket. At present, there are 74 wet markets all over the territory managed by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) (newest one opened in 2008), many occupying prime locations in the built-up area.

Planning of Public Markets

5. In the 2017 Policy Agenda, we pledged to study the need and feasibility of providing new public markets in districts where relevant facilities are alleged to be

insufficient.

6. Providing a new public market requires the use of scarce land resources and entails public financial commitment both capital and recurrent. We also observe evolving customer preference for shopping venues in purchasing fresh provisions. Given these premises, in considering whether a public market should be built, we have to duly assess the need for the market and cost effectiveness and to ensure proper use of public resources. The Audit Commission has also pointed out in previous reports that, given the high cost of constructing a new public market, the relevant principles should be strictly adhered to.

7. In the above light, the provision of new public markets would be considered on a case-by-case basis. The Government will take into account relevant factors including demographic mix, community needs, provision of both public and private market facilities nearby and number of fresh provision retail outlets in the vicinity. We would also take into account the actual situation of individual districts and the views of stakeholders in the process. We believe the above represents a holistic consideration of all relevant factors in the planning of public markets¹.

Design and Site Parameters

8. In building a new generation of public markets, we need to introduce new design features to facilitate modern management and meet the expectations of patrons in today's retail environment. Notably –

- (a) The market should be positioned as one serving a wide community in the district, which should be kept reasonably decent, clean, neat and tidy without being unduly upmarket, with a reasonably large number of stalls and the proper trade mix offering choices and varieties of fresh provisions to attract patrons near and far.
- (b) Each of the stalls should be reasonably large such that stall operators can conduct all the business operation, including storage, preparation, sale, and cleaning (floor drainage inside), within the boundary of the stall to prevent obstruction and keep the passageway dry.
- (c) The stall passageways for patrons should be generous to allow pleasant strolling and shopping as well as easy access by strollers and wheelchairs.
- (d) Universal accessibility provisions must be provided up to contemporary

¹ The holistic approach is reflected in the current Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines. In practice, when preparing or reviewing statutory town plans for different areas/districts, the Planning Department will seek the advice of the Food and Health Bureau and FEHD on the need to reserve land for new public markets.

standards.

- (e) More space should be reserved for general circulation, communal areas, creating a cleaner and enticing environment for a better shopping experience.
 - (f) The market should be provided at the lower floors with stalls spreading over at most two floors² with easy access to pedestrian traffic, or in other words, be located on the ground and first floors as far as possible.
 - (g) The frontage of the market building should be made best use of to attract patrons in the street.
9. The design parameters would translate into specific site and location requirements. In terms of site selection in individual districts, the following parameters will become pertinent –
- (a) The site, and in turn each floor of the building erected upon, should be reasonably large in size to accommodate the wet market in one or two floors.
 - (b) The site itself should bestow heavy pedestrian traffic on the future market, which should best be achieved by a location next to a major transport hub where commuters frequent every day.
 - (c) Where possible, the site should best be part of, or adjacent to, a retail and catering cluster in a commercial setting, for synergy effect to boost business.
 - (d) In line with Government policy, where the site is zoned for "Government, Institution or Community" purposes, we will pursue the "single site, multiple use" model in multi-storey developments and welcome collaboration with other public agencies to accommodate compatible use.

New Markets under Planning

10. Based on the above parameters, we are pursuing a number of new public market projects. Progress is set out as follows –

- (a) **Tin Shui Wai** – We have located a site at a section of Tin Fuk Road between Tin Shing Road and Tin Yiu Road adjoining the Tin Shui Wai

² In the case of also providing a cooked food centre in the new public market, a 3-storey facility is considered acceptable.

MTR Station to develop a new public market. We propose to adopt innovative market design, either decking over a section of Tin Fuk Road for floor space or creating a meeting place through building the new market at grade with and next to the Light Rail and MTR stations. Local consultation on two design options is underway.

- (b) **Tung Chung Town Centre** – We have selected a site at the town centre adjacent to the Tung Chung MTR station. The site is intended for land sale to implement the planned commercial use under the relevant Outline Zoning Plan. Subject to the outcomes of the Government’s engineering feasibility study on site development, the purchaser of the site will be required to incorporate a market in the development. Upon completion, the market will be handed over to the Government. Local consultation is underway.

11. In addition, we are pursuing a number of new markets in areas such as Tseung Kwan O, Kwu Tung North New Development Area (NDA), Hung Shui Kiu NDA and Tung Chung New Town Extension. These projects are at different stages of planning, and we are working with relevant departments in delivering these new markets so as to provide more choices to the public in purchasing fresh food.

12. The Government will continue to study the need and feasibility of providing new public markets in districts where relevant facilities are alleged to be insufficient. In considering whether new public markets should be provided in these areas, we would continue to be guided by the planning mechanism and design and site parameters set out above.

New Management Mode

13. The commissioning of new public markets in due course would need to usher in a new management mode in a clean slate manner without historical baggage. In this connection, we have set out our views in another paper on reform of public market management.

Advice sought

14. Members are invited to give views on the directions for new public markets.

Food and Health Bureau
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department
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